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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KCRS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: VP HASHEMI VISITS SAMARRA
REF: BAGHDAD 1871

Classified By: PRT SaD Team Leader Rick Bell for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Salah ad Din reporting cable.

¶2. (C) Summary: On June 22, Sunni Vice President Tareq Al-Hashemi made an unannounced visit to Samarra in southern Salah ad Din province to deliver a message of support for reconstruction efforts. Hashemi is the most senior GOI official to visit the city since the end of violence that ensued following the bombings of the Shi'a Golden Mosque in 2006 and 2007. Hashemi heard numerous complaints from city council members about the lack of progress by the provincial and central government to promote reconstruction in Samarra. Hashemi also received a briefing on security issues from Major General Rasheed, the head of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Samarra. Following a meeting with religious and Sons of Iraq (SOIZ) leaders, Hashemi expressed his support for integration of SOIZ members into the Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP). A newly reopened local business appealed to Hashemi for GOI assistance to expand its business. End Summary.

¶3. (C) Sunni Vice President Tareq Al-Hashemi met with local political, religious, and business leaders during a surprise visit to Samarra on June 22. Mayor Mahmood Khalif Ahmed briefed Hashemi on reconstruction efforts in this predominant Sunni city. City council members complained loudly to Hashemi about the lack of reconstruction progress and openly blamed the provincial and central government for their lackluster efforts to promote development, a sentiment they said is held by the majority of Samarrans. They cited as an example that the provincial government has not awarded any contracts to local Samarran contractors.

¶4. (C) Hashemi received a briefing on security issues from Major General Rasheed, the head of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Samarra. Hashemi also met with Sons of Iraq (SOIZ) leaders who appealed for increased integration of SOIZ members into the Iraqi Security Forces. Religious leaders at this meeting requested assistance to reopen a religious studies institute and complained that local leaders were not permitted to enter the Shi'a Al-Askari (Golden) Mosque compound, which is currently under renovation. At the meeting's conclusion, Hashemi expressed his support for integration of SOIZ members into the Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP).

¶5. (C) Hashemi concluded his visit with tours of the Shi'a Al-Askari (Golden) Mosque and the newly reopened Samarra Drug Institute, where plant management requested his assistance to increase drug orders from the Ministries of Defense, Interior, and Health.

¶6. (C) Comment: Hashemi is the most senior GOI official to visit the city since the end of a wave of violence that gripped the city following the bombings of the Golden Mosque in 2006 and 2007. Hashemi's visit also signals the first time a high-level GOI official has called on city officials

before visiting the Golden Mosque, which official visitors have not typically done in the past. Samarra is a predominantly Sunni city, and its residents are sensitive to unannounced visits to the (Shi'a) Golden Mosque, particularly by GOI or provincial officials who do not make the effort to discuss broader reconstruction efforts with city officials.
End Comment.
CROCKER